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1

Introduction

Okinawan history is the story of inertia and change. Basil Hall Chamberlain, the distinguished Japanese and Ryukyuan scholar of the last century and grandson of Basil Hall who visited the island in 1816, said rightly in 1895 that "the general assertion may safely be hazarded that Oriental stagnation exists only in Occidental fancy."[1]

One of the reasons for this fancy is that there is a certain stability in parts of the culture, and from this circumstance it is often concluded that changelessness and lack of variety have characterized the historical experience of the people. Agricultural methods seem to have changed little with the centuries, though some of the tools are new. This stability in agriculture is another way of saying that a fine technology based on experience and empiric observation, had been developed, and that in the absence of modern scientific knowledge of soils, crops, plant pathology and fertilizers, it was the best technology possible under the circumstances. The tombs, introductions from China over five centuries ago, add to this impression of the changelessness of rural life. But this is more apparent than real when we look into the history of burial customs more closely.

This view of Okinawan history in terms of inertia and change has meaning for the present. The American influence on Okinawa is not a new way of life that is conditioning a static society, but an important, forceful, and new intrusion in a culture that already has undergone fundamental changes in the past. Those who think within the framework of Western European and American history, those whose minds are trained to recognize the changes which have come about as a result of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the beginnings of theoretical science in the seventeenth century, tend to neglect the rest of world history as relatively unchanging, or to see only those changes coming about from Western intrusions. This one sided interpretation, often expressed in the idea of the Europeanization or the Westernization of the world, should be supplemented with the insight that Oriental cultures have influenced and changed one another greatly and have still maintained their own distinctive features. Chinese influences have been strong in Korea, Japan, and the Ryukyus. But each of these cultures is separate and distinct, although, as one might expect, contemporary Okinawan society bears the strong imprint of long cultural and economic associations with Japan.

1 The Luchu Islands and their Inhabitants. Geo. Journal 5 (1895), 311.

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contact with Okinawa may have taken place in 743 A.D., but this may have been confined to the island of Kume, west of Naha, and not involved Okinawa itself.[6] 175 177 648

The modern Japanese contact with Okinawa which brought about the fall of the Tenson dynasty is associated with the arrival at Unten of Tametomo in the latter part of the twelfth century. Some have regarded this as historical, others as perhaps legendary.

Unten, on the Motobu peninsula, is one of the important places in the historical geography of Okinawa island. This is the Port Melville of the Western explorers, Hall and Perry, both of whom charted the bay and its harbor.

Tametomo, of the Minamoto clan, exiled after the final defeat of the Minamoto by the Taira clan in Japan, ultimately reached Unten and there married the daughter of one of the regional nobles, and after a period of civil war, the Tenson dynasty collapsed. In 1187 A. D., the son of Minamoto Tametomo by his Okinawan wife became King Shunten. Shunten, the first of three "Japanese kings," was followed by his son Shunsa Junki (1238-1248), and his grandson Gihon (1249-1260). In 1260, the legitimate dynasty was restored under king Eiso.[7]

After his succession, Eiso toured the islands and is credited with setting regular boundaries to rice-fields. "It has been said that this greatly attracted the people so that they started to look after farming." Graves, according to a manuscript history, were first built in the island, at Urasoye, and the Buddhist temple, Gokurakuji was constructed with an officiating priest named Jenkan in charge of the temple.[8] 176 346

The Japanese syllabary may have been introduced at this time. Buddhism apparently did not take hold. Chinese attacks on the islands in connection with the Mongol wars and the attempted invasion of Japan seem to have left no mark on the island. 210 199

The year 1372 is the beginning of the period of relationships with the Chinese, in this case, the Ming dynasty. This is contemporary with the growth of a vast trade network involving Korea, Japan, China, the Ryukyus, and Southeast Asia. It is not clear whether the trade voyages under King Satsudo (reigned 1350-1399) to South China, Malaya, and the Philippines were instrumental in stimulating the Ming dynasty to engage in the Pacific trade, or whether the forced alliance of the Ryukyus with the Chinese 175 648 439

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6 CA Handbook, as cited, 41, and Chamberlain, as cited, 306.

7 Chamberlain, as cited, 308

8 Manuscript history in Leavenworth, The Loochoo islands, 80. On the Japanese syllabary, see Chamberlain, as cited, 308.

The village is one of a series of settlements in a long narrow valley, on a limestone plain, bordered on the east by a steep ridge, up to 300 feet in elevation and running in a northwest and southeast direction, which divides the valley from the sea. On these cliff like formations, large outcrops are covered with shrubs and miscanthus grass. Lanes and roads lead from the valley floor to the summits of these hills, where villagers collect their firewood and grass for roof thatch. On the rocky, steep slopes of this seaward ridge, above the line of cultivation, is the tomb area. Precipitous and stony hills prevent cultivation, but occasionally a sharp tongue of land reaches far up the slope, its end protected from the rains and wash by a short stone fence.

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Between Oushichan and Hanashiro village, there is a bridge over a small stream, its upstream course obscured by its dispersion in the rice fields. The dirt road, gradually ascending, cuts through the main rice growing area of the village, on a gentle slope, reflected in the bench cultivation of the rice fields. Here and there are large rocks and stony outcrops, with an occasional scrub pine, cycad, or a covering of miscanthus. Cultivation goes around these large stones.

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The road, about one-fourth of a mile from the bridge, soon leads into what looks like, from a distance, a densely wooded area. This is the settlement.

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With the exception of the rough stony land of the limestone mountains and steep slopes, the soils of the area are the Okinawa clay loams and the Chinen stony clays lying on the limestone plains. The farm and village area takes up approximately 427 acres, of which 257 are in gently sloping Okinawa clay loams, a deep, well drained, neutral to slightly acid and very fertile soil. Another five acres is of the same type but these are in slopes, of a gradient ranging from 8-15%. There are 80 acres in gently sloping Shuri clays, shallow, moderately fertile, an olive colored, crumbly, calcareous clay; another 35 acres in the Awase clays, deep fertile, crumbly, calcareous clay of olive-gray color, and 14 acres of rough stony land.

134 133 311

The hillsides and the summits are free of densely growing trees and shrubs, and the lowlands are given over to cultivation. There are no groves of trees to protect the crops from typhoons. The trees and the protection they give are confined to the village. This is typical of many villages of southern Okinawa, where the hills and mountains have few trees, and dense growths are associated with habitation.

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Inside the village, winding lanes branch off the main dirt road. The older houses are on the north side of the road. On the opposite side, the houses, newer or rebuilt since the war, adjoin the cultivated area. In the older section, the dense shrubbery, the tree lined lanes, broken occasionally by stone fences, wind through the village with footpaths branching off, sometimes past an open field, a reminder of a failure to rebuild after the war. On the northern outskirts is the village office, its gong in the yard, the open field, a playground for the children.

361 363 [417] [487] [367]

The people of Nagamo are farmers. The seat of their extended families is in Naha and Shuri, and they have their own local deity places (ujigami in Japanese). The people of Minatogawa are fishermen, their extended family seats are in Itoman. They too have their local deities and many of their religious ceremonies are centered around the gods of the sea and the dragon of the sea god's palace.

The population of Minatogawa, as of December 31, 1951, was 1108 (515 males, 593 females) in 213 households, an average of 5.2 persons per household, and of adjoining Nagamo, 564 persons (262 males, 302 females) with 113 households, an average of 5.0 persons per household.

The fishing village of Minatogawa is believed to be about 250 years old. It was founded, according to local residents, by the fishermen of Itoman who were accustomed to fish off shore near the islands around the southeastern and southwestern parts of Okinawa. The place was first established as a temporary location for the fishing boats and later permanent settlement took place. The tombs of Itoman are still the ultimate burying ground for large numbers of the Minatogawa fishermen. After 250 years the ties with the parent town are still strong.

The village has two traditions involving contacts with other peoples. The first is concerned with the Chinese. One is a spot on the shore where some Chinese are said to have landed over 200 years ago. Many fishermen pray to it on certain occasions of the year. Little is known of what happened to the Chinese, but supposedly they were buried high up the side of a steep mountain nearby, inside a cave with stalactites. Bones said to be of these Chinese may still be seen there. The cave is difficult of access.

There is also the tradition of London sailors said to have been shipwrecked at the port of Kiyan on the southwest tip of Okinawa. A child was born of the union of one of these sailors with an Okinawan woman and the sailor later returned to England. The tomb of the woman and the child is revered as a religious site. It is now a small shrine on the outskirts of Itoman called Rondongama, Rondon for London.[9] Old women of Minatogawa sing a song of this old love called Michinakankai. The theme of the song is the unashamed love of the woman for her departed London lover, an Okinawan anticipation of Madame Butterfly.

In this area the low, bare hills form in a haphazard way a series of valleys, some long and narrow, others like an amphitheatre with an open face to the sea. Low passes connect the valleys. One such pass, about 150 feet high, now on Highway 64, leads from the valley of

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9 The writer visited both the cave and the site near Itoman town in August 1951. The shrine is now situated on a small hill on the outskirts of Itoman. The bones were moved here during the war from Haizato village to escape Japanese bombing. A large cave nearby, associated with the mother and the child, is overgrown and very dangerous to enter because of the danger of snakes.

engaged in fishing are permanent or transient families originally from Itoman, a place name which comes up whenever fishing is mentioned anywhere in Okinawa. Agriculture and the care and utilization of the community forest make up the significant economic activities of the village.

Matsuda had a population of 1370 individuals (604 male, 766 female) as of November 30, 1951. There were, at this time, 243 households, an average of 5.6 persons per household. The village is said by local residents and antiquarians to be about 600 years old. If the age is correct, it must be one of the older settlements in northern Okinawa. Before the war, this village was known as Kochiya.

Matsuda also has its lore regarding shipwrecks and foreigners. There are old men who believe Perry's party came to the village and that they left carvings on the top of a picturesque rock in the Burushii district along the coast, a not unbelievable story since the explorers certainly were not far from here.

Near the seashore, but in a very remote area, there is a natural bridge, concealed by large trees. Roots of the banyan grow through the thirty or forty foot drop from the top of the bridge until they find root in the soil below. On a ledge under this bridge, there are two old and open boxes which were used to collect the skulls and bones of unknown persons. Locally it is believed that they are the remains of shipwrecked sailors, possibly Hollanders. There are still 25 or 30 skulls there, and many of the bones are scattered on the ground. The place is seldom visited.

The village rests on low rolling hills. The combination of the hills, the depressions, the caves and the sinks give the topography an uneven almost rugged character. There are few flat places and these are seldom wide. They are the narrow meadows or valleys between the hills. The hilly nature of the surroundings determines to a large extent the manner of cultivation, and historically probably has had much to do with the shapes of the individual parcels themselves. One does not see in this area the plains or small valleys with rice cultivation that is observed in Haneji township near Nago or around the island of U in Tamagusuku township, or even in the Hanashiro area of Gushichan township. In these communities, the normal pattern of cultivation is that the rice is on the lowlands, with the slopes and upland areas devoted to sugar cane, the sweet potato, or other crops, or left to native grasses. Here in the hundreds of small hills, all of these may be observed in close proximity, hard work and minute tillage comprising with the topography.

The village is subdivided into several distinct areas: (1) the main part of the village where most of the houses, the village office, the small stores, the rice mill, the sawmill, the power plant, and the barbershop are located, (2) a reclaimed area known locally as the kaikon, newly settled and with a different type of land use due to the poorness of the land and to the fact that it is a deforested area, (3) a district near the sea coast and along the sea with scattered settlements, isolated houses, and some cultivation, and (4) the forest lands, which in the

the house from the glances of the curious. It has been suggested that the stationary gate at the entrance of the courtyard is of Chinese origin, that its purpose originally was to scare away spirits, and that its former presence in the tomb compound indicates that it was introduced along with the turtleback or horseshoe tomb from Fukien province in China.[2]

Captain Hall described Okinawan house exteriors and the surrounding buildings, including those of the common people. The house was "buried in foliage" and hidden from view. It was surrounded by a light fence of rods, about one foot apart with creepers on top. These rods were probably stalks of miscanthus grass, or of the dwarf bamboo. The site had a wicker gate, possibly meaning the hinpun made out of the dried grass stalks. One house which he described was divided into two compartments, eight feet square, with a small veranda at one end. The floors, made of bamboo, and about six feet above the ground, were covered with a straw mat. The walls, about five feet high, were wattled with split bamboo, and the house had a pointed thatched roof.

In the interior, there were shelves for bowls and cups, and in a loft or garret tools, nets, or baskets were stored. These installations now are often found in the kitchen. In the middle of one side of the house there was a fireplace, sunk below the level of the ground.

Outside, in the compound, a pigeon house, poultry yard and spinning wheels were observed. In another passage, Hall describes a cottage of "wattled rattans" with a light open bamboo roof with thatch and creepers, one wing of which was occupied by goats. The compound consisted of a stable, a pig sty, and a poultry house. There was also a mill. The granary was on posts about six feet above the ground with firewood piled below. There was an anvil with a forge of masonry but no bellows.[3]

The houses of the poor, said Fahs in his report to Commodore Perry, were made of bamboo and had no floors.[4] Accounts around the turn of the century say that houses and granaries were supported by corner posts of considerable height. Schwartz said these posts were about five feet high. The house walls of straw thatch were held in place by bamboo grass matting with a space two feet in width acting both as a door and a window, a matting curtain covering the aperture.[5]

[Text continues top of p. 73--Analyst]

2 Simon, as cited, 80. C. W. Bishop has suggested that the stone houses of the Ainus of Hokkaido point to contact with southern insular peoples. Also, the primitive Japanese hut which was illustrated resembled the one we have been describing for Okinawa. It had a thatched roof and a courtyard which was cut off from the outside view by the hinpun. The historical geography of early Japan. Geo. Review, 13 (1923), 40-63. Note especially Figures 5 and 6. (This article was reprinted in Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1925).

3 Captain Basil Hall, Voyage to Corea and the Great Loo Choo, as cited, 124, 141, 142-43.

4 Hawks, Perry's expedition to Japan, as cited, Vol. II, 50.

5 Henry B. Schwartz, In Togo's country. New York and Cincinnati, 1908, 148-49.

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to the extended family, even if in some cases relationships are very distant. This point may be illustrated by discussing the relationships among six families named Shiroma in Hanashiro. The first family is the contemporary representative of the main family line. It is a main family. Its present head is an adopted child, but that does not change the situation. The second family head is a descendant of the younger brother of the grandfather of the head of the family; he is the grandson of the main head's great uncle, and therefore a second cousin of the head of the main family. The third and fourth families are branch families established by his father's younger brothers and are his first cousins. The fifth family is a very old branch family, going farther back than the grandfather. The sixth, in turn, is a branch family of the fifth. The present head of the main family does not know the relationship of the present heads of these two households to himself.

The fact that there are 16 main families with their 75 branches in the village of Hanashiro does not mean that there are not other branches of these main families. There are more than 75 families in the extended family. These are merely the branches of these 16 main families which reside in the village.

The head of a main house has responsibilities which are not shared by the heads of the branch families. He is the custodian of the tomb of the extended family. The head house is the meeting place of the extended family reunions. These normally take place on the 15th day of the 7th lunar month, the festival of O-Bon, and on lunar New Year. The extended families, or representatives that may reside in a village which is also the seat of the extended family decide questions of concern to the extended family as a whole. Such a question might be the case of a widow with minor children. For economic reasons, she seeks to sell her property. Since the disposal of property in land is intimately connected with the present and future fortunes of a family, the members of the extended family, especially if many reside in the same place, discuss this matter and give advice which the young widow in practice follows.

Hanashiro is a good example of an old agricultural community in which descendant families have tended to remain in the same place as the original founder of the family. Those collateral families with main houses elsewhere are, in the main, from adjacent or nearby areas.

When this situation is compared with Minatogawa, certain differences are at once apparent. The fishermen of present day Minatogawa are descendants of settlers originally from the large fishing town of Itoman. Many of these fishing families are related by blood and intermarriage. Not only this, but there is a web of interrelationship which includes Itoman and its daughter village of Minatogawa. Of the 213 households in Minatogawa, 53 had the surname of Tamaki (or Tamashiro), 47 of Uehara, 21 of Oshiro, and 20 of Kanashiro, the four surnames accounting for 141 of the total households. People with the same surname who live in the same village are almost invariably related.[4] Compared with other

4 In sample checks made personally this turned out to be true, but the relationship was often so distant as to be unknown. All informants stated that people living in the same village who had the same surname were relatives.

villages studied, these frequencies of families with the same surname are very high. The seat of these extended families of the Hinatogawa fishermen is in almost every instance the town of Itoman. The tombs of Hinatogawa are entirely different from those of the neighboring agricultural communities. They are small and temporary tombs for keeping remains that will later be removed to the large, often dramatically situated extended family tombs of Itoman. One resident of Hinatogawa aptly described his village as a "bunke (branch family) of Itoman."

This is an unusual situation and can not be fully explained except by a study of Itoman and the smaller fishing villages scattered throughout Okinawa Island. One explanation might be that historically Okinawans have been farmers, and that, while they are excellent fishermen, they have not as a people participated in large numbers in fishing, leaving this activity to definite groups, such as the people of Itoman town. The passing down of occupations of the father to the son, the infrequency of change in occupation, especially from agriculture to fishing, the establishment of daughter villages, such as Hinatogawa, might account for the fact that fishing is the occupation of a compact group of families who have intermarried and continued in their traditional occupations. Even in Matsuda, to the north, the temporary colonies of fishermen are either Itoman people or are their descendants. (There are of course a few local farmers who do some fishing). The close ties between Hinatogawa and its parent town of Itoman illustrate the persistence of occupational and social relationships over a period of two and a half centuries.

Certain exceptions to the usual practice in Hinatogawa accentuate the closeness of extended family relationships between Itoman and Hinatogawa. As an illustration, we may take the case of three related families in Hinatogawa who are not fishermen. The head of one family is a retired farmer, his son is a school teacher, and a third is a distant relative is a stone cutter. These people, formerly members or descendants of members of the nobility, came from Shuri. The main house of their extended family is in Shuri. This contemporary extended family now has so many members that the places for reunions and meetings have been increased, since the site of the main house in Shuri, founded by the original ancestor, can no longer accommodate all the members. The places of worship are divided into the main place, (umuta in Okinawan) and intermediate places (nakamutu in Okinawan). Some of these secondary places of worship are in nearby Naha. The number of these cases is small compared with the closely knit ties of the fishermen's families with Itoman town.

In Matsuda, the extended family operates as it does in Hanashiro, the former town, there is an illustration of another point regarding the extended family system: the identity of a family name with a village name. Historically, the family took the name of the place; the place did not receive the name of the family. Though the situation is not clear, it would seem that when the king made grants of land to nobles that they adopted the name given by the king to the place, while commoners did not receive surnames, but were known by their household rank order -- to be explained in Section 8. The village of Matsuda, for example, is the

In this illustration, the first son receives slightly over 60% of the land, ignoring type and grade within type. There was general agreement in all villages that the grade of land within each classification (grades 1 to 4 in dry crop land, for example) had little significance in inheritance matters. The grade is more important for tax purposes.

The example also illustrates two other principles: the natural desire to keep contiguous or close in land within the main family, using inconvenient or far off land where possible for house sites for branch families, or for arable land for second and other sons. In this illustration, the shares of the second and of the third sons could be equalized by subdividing plot #6, although its small area would not make it worth while, as 75 tsubo is a very low average size for dry crop land.

Another practice, noted in Hanashiro and in Matsuda, is that the first son receives everything on the retirement of the father. This may be contrasted with a situation in which the father divides the property before younger sons marry and establish branch families. In such cases, the father might take the income from part of the property. But the more general practice is for the father to give all to the first son. Fathers may also make a will. When the first son receives all, it is the custom for him to hold property which the younger sons will need in establishing their branch families. It is in cases where the first son is given full disposition of the property that quarrels are most likely to occur, for much depends on the generosity and sense of fairness of the elder brother.[3]

In Hanashiro and Minatogawa, it is important that younger brothers receive genya land. Genya is often translated as wild land. In Japan the term is usually used to describe treeless, waste, hilly, rocky, or rolling land unsuitable for cultivation. In Okinawa, the genya land may be in the center of a rice field; it may be a rocky mound with cultivation around it. It may be land in the mountains. It is almost invariably in grass (miscanthus) with an occasional cycad or scrub pine. It is not owned in large tracts. In Hanashiro, the largest single parcel is 4564 tsubo (3.77 acres), in Minatogawa 1333 (tsubo) (1.9 acres), and in Matsuda 6398 tsubo (5.28 acres), but these are far above the average. In Hanashiro it is important because grass is constantly needed for thatched roofs and other uses. The importance of genya and its grass was well illustrated in Minatogawa after the typhoon, Ruth, of October 13-14, 1951. These villagers own little land and many have no genya. They were obliged to buy the grass to replace the roofs of many of the frailer houses which had been partially or completely destroyed by the typhoon. Genya is also used for family tombs. In Hanashiro, the genya

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3 The problem can be appreciated by analyzing the acreage areas of each classification of land and the grades within it, bearing in mind that the average farmer has hatake, genya, and often rice paddies. These statistics will be given in the following chapter.

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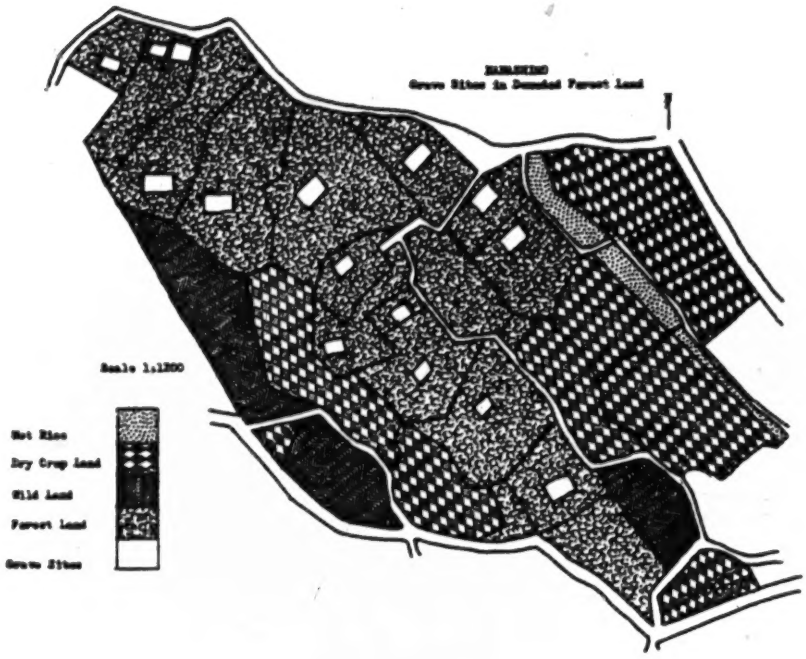

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sandstone one sees in the new buildings of Naha often is from the quarries of this area. Stone quarries are scattered in various parts of Okinawa, but the Hinatogawa stone is considered the best.

Sandstone quarrying started, according to older settlers, about sixty years ago. Cutting began on the coast, gradually working up slope over rolling stony land. It is an interesting example of the transformation of a landscape by man. Now with the old methods still in use, the cutting has extended beyond the village. Stonecutting operations in the main are in the steep bluffs around both villages, although there are numerous cuttings in the newer settlements of Hinatogawa and along the seashore. Frequently the cut stone blocks lie near the temporary Hinatogawa tombs which dot the rocky coast. By the simplest methods, large quantities of stone have been and continue to be removed. All work is done by hand; machinery was installed by the Americans after the war, but it is out of working order and stands idle.

Before the war, stonecutting in this vicinity was a more thriving industry than now. Quarries are also found in neighboring Tamagusuku township and there is a distributing outlet in Horikawa, the village across the river. Before the war from 300-500 men are said to have engaged in stonecutting. Now there are about 120 in both villages. Many of these stone workers had come from other parts of Okinawa and the Ryukyus: men from the offshore islands, Ie-shima, the Kerama chain, and Iheya, and on the south east, from Kudaka, Tsuken, and Hoanza islands. Most of these settlers from the offshore islands have left. A few, born on Ie-shima, or from the northern district still remain.

Since the war coastwise shipping of lumber and firewood from the north and stone from the south had declined sharply. Trucks have largely displaced the boats. Transport costs are high and the stone is in demand in closer markets.

2

Acquiring and Working the Land

Customary practices govern the quarrying of stone. These eliminate the need for written agreements. Interested persons know the properties and the possibilities of each site. These customary practices are concerned with the acquisition, the working and the restoration of land. Techniques for working the stone have remained nearly the same for at least sixty years.

The stonecutter purchases rights to the stone, not the land itself. When the stone has been extracted, the land is returned to its owner. This is unimproved land, but after the stone has been quarried, a house may be built on the site. When a stonecutter (sekko) wishes to acquire a certain holding, he calls on the owner of the land. Following oral negotiations, the price is agreed upon. A good price

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1

Death and Funeral Services

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Okinawans, as so many have thought, are not preoccupied with death, burial customs, and their tombs. The popular criticism that they extravagantly spend all their money building tombs is unjust and comes from a superficial understanding of their function. Memorial observances, not the tombs, are the real sources of expense to surviving relatives. [769]

764●
The same basic customs were found in all the villages. On the death of an adult, the eyes are closed, the body washed, and fresh clothes are put on it. There is no embalming. The finger nails and hair are cut. (Haircutting is not universal). The body is then placed in a small wooden coffin. This is about 19 inches wide and about 22 inches deep, with the length varying according to height. An average length would be slightly over 4 feet. This is the traditional Buddhist coffin. Placing the body in a coffin this size requires doubling it up. The head rests on a small Japanese type pillow (makura). The legs are bent to bring the knees near the chin, and the hands folded over the chest. Articles for use in the afterworld, okurimono ("sending away things"), are also placed in the coffin. Though the articles vary, they generally include a pair of slippers, a kimono (for a woman), a kimono or western style pair of pants for a man, tobacco and tobacco cases, a towel, and sake in one flask, and water in another. Seven needles are stuck on each side of the kimono or the lapel of a coat. In Nanashiro, clogs and slippers are not placed in the coffin, but in front of the tomb at interment. When the coffin is closed, it is turned with the head facing west.[1]

On death, close relatives up to first cousins are first summoned, followed by relatives in the extended family living in or near the village. There are no hard and fast customs about taking care of the body. First or other sons may take care of a father's body; brothers and cousins of a young girl's; the first son of the mother's; the eldest younger brother of an elder brother's; the first son or the father of a second or succeeding son's. Sometimes female relatives take care of the body. A husband or wife does not perform this duty for the other. The father or the mother prepare the body of a younger child.

Burial follows death very quickly. By law a body must be buried within 24 hours, but the interment is often quicker than this. An adult

1 There is confusion whether the head is placed to the north or to the west because the Okinawan word for north is the Japanese word for west.

764 dying in the evening or during the night is buried the next day, one dying in the morning will probably be interred by nightfall.

766 Burial customs for children differ from those of adults. The immediate burial of a dead child seems to be general in the villages, even if, according to one informant, it dies at 12 or 1 o'clock in the morning. With the death verified, relatives are called, and the child might be taken away within 15 minutes. Certain distinctions are made depending on whether (1) the child is still-born or dies shortly after birth, (2) the child is under 8 years old, and (3) the child is 8 years or older. A premature, still-born child, or an infant dying shortly after birth is buried almost immediately in the [845] compound, usually behind the house. The child under eight is buried in a temporary grave near the family tomb, remaining there until the family tomb is opened upon the death of an adult. The infant's bones are then gathered up and put in the tomb. The temporary grave is prepared by a younger man of the family. The dead child is carried by the mother, an aunt or other female relative. The tomb, in general practice, is opened for a child over 8 years of age.

These are general statements and the details vary. In Minatogawa, for example, a child's funeral is similar to an adult's, but the body is not put in the coffin until the tomb is reached. The mother, or a close female relative, carries it in her arms. The coffin is carried by other mourners. The explanation given is that it was formerly believed that the child might revive on the way. In a child's funeral here, there is no banner announcing the name and death date, at the head of the procession. Neither is a hearse or funeral palanquin (gan) used.

In Matsuda, this palanquin also is not used for children 8 and under. Whether a tomb is opened for a child seems to depend on individual family custom. In one case, an extended family tomb was not opened for a child; in another it was. The child is carried to the tomb and then placed in the coffin. In this village, children are not buried immediately. The custom is the same as for adults.

764 Judging by descriptions which villagers gave of pre-war customs, 178 funerals and burial customs have been simplified in the post-war period. The services of Buddhist priests have been almost completely dispensed with. Offerings are more modest. Priestesses (noro) and their assistants [793] seldom officiate. The contemporary rural Okinawan funeral is simple. The following description of a funeral observed near Gushichan village probably is typical.

764 The deceased, a woman of 40, died about eleven in the morning. The funeral procession passed the village office at 5:30 on the same day. There were no special ceremonies before the funeral. The body, washed and dressed, had been placed in the coffin which was put on the funeral palanquin or hearse. This red palanquin is normally owned by the village. Since the war, not all villages have an gan.

The hearse was carried by four young men. (There may be 8 pallbearers,

764

four for relief if the tomb is at a distance). At the head of the procession, there was a group of older men, some relatives, some close friends of the family. Behind them was the hearse, followed by the immediate female relatives of the deceased. One of these, a young daughter, crying softly, was helped along by an aunt. At the end were the rest of the women, both friends and neighbors.

The procession left the road and wound up a narrow path leading to the tomb, located on the summit of a rocky hill with a magnificent view of the nearby mountains, the valley and the sea below. The ringing of a bell could be heard as the hearse approached the tomb. A small stone in front of the tomb had been removed. Above the opening, a white cloth, about the size of a large handkerchief fluttered in the chill wind. On it there was written (in Chinese characters) "The spirit of _____"(_____ no rei). Friends and relatives went in the tomb area. Others remained outside its entrances, standing in the grass near a sweet potato patch, reclaimed from the stony soil. When the hearse arrived, the pallbearers immediately took the coffin out. It was shoved into the aperture of the tomb, one or two men going in first to guide it in straight. The point of the final farewell had now been reached. The women relatives who had gathered around the hearse now sobbed and cried more audibly. The men did not assemble as a group. Neither was there any outward sign of grief among them. During this short period of final prayer, everyone kneeled. The stone was replaced over the opening. Charcoal sticks were lighted. The prayer over, everyone walked silently down the path from the rocky hill with its high miscanthus grass. There was a high wind and the dusk was deepened by the low dark thunder clouds.

Several comments are worth mentioning regarding the preceding description. At the head of the procession there may be a small banner (hata) with the name of the deceased and the date of death. This practice has fallen into disuse. When used, either a white or red (the color seems to have no significance) banner is carried by a grandchild or other child relative of the deceased. Hinatogawa was the only village in which the banner was still used.

The method of selecting pallbearers may also vary. In Hinatogawa, they are usually chosen from among friends and relatives. In Hanashiro, the young men from the neighborhood group (han) in which the deceased lived become the pallbearers. Here also adults representing each family in the village assemble as a mark of respect in front of the house of the deceased.

The order of march in the procession is fairly standardized: (1) the banner if used, (2) the male mourners. In some instances, male relatives precede the others. (3) The palanquin with the coffin, (4) the close female relatives of the deceased. This group occasionally may include parents and children, although it is more usual for the adult male relatives to be in the leading group, and (5) the women, without regard to relationship.

●764 The beginning of a funeral procession is announced by a gong in the yard of a village office. The head man and other leaders and elders of the village attend the funeral. The mayor of the township or his representative joins in the procession.

[793] A Buddhist priest (bōsu-san) did not officiate at this funeral. Priests are scarce in rural Okinawa. Most of them were Japanese who returned to Japan after the war. Families can also save by dispensing with the Buddhist service. The participation of Buddhist priests, already nominal before the war, has now in the villages studied, virtually disappeared.

764 431 It is customary at a death to give a ten or twenty yen offering to the family. The money is put in a small envelop with an expression of sympathy written on it. (In Okinawa money is the usual gift at marriage, birthday celebrations, and at death. The gift may be put in a small envelop but it is common also to give a loose bill).

765 [782] Early on the morning following the funeral, the tomb is visited by members of the family. Food offerings of rice, tea, sake, and a flower may be placed in front of the tomb. A charcoal stick is burned. These visits with the offerings and prayers on the following morning are associated with a belief, still held by the old, that the dead

[761] person might still be alive and that the pounding of an adult on the wall or the crying of a child might be heard so that the living could be rescued from the tomb. The belief that the person might still be alive and possibly could be heard seems to persist in Hanashiro and Hinatogawa. It was not encountered in Matsuda, although it might well exist.

2

Burial Places and the Family System

764 Okinawan tombs have excited the interest of foreigners from the earliest days of European contact. There are no cemeteries in the usual sense of the word, but areas scattered throughout the countryside, usually on the tops of hills, or on the stony sides of mountains, are

[311] given over to burial grounds. Tombs are not located on land suitable for agriculture. It has been said that the Japanese forbad using agricultural land for tombs, but the practice in Okinawa seems to antedate these Japanese interferences in the culture of the rural areas. In the interior, the tombs are always on wild (genya) land. But one can also see tombs along the seashore and on offshore rocks. The outstanding

[565] exceptions to this are the royal tomb area in Shuri, now largely destroyed, and the large and dramatically placed tombs in the center of Itoman town. In the case of Itoman, it is quite probable that the growing town has surrounded the areas taken as tomb sites.

Of the several types of tombs, the turtleback (kamekokata) is the most famous. It has been variously described by European travellers as

the tomb shaped like a horseshoe or the Greek letter, omega. A great deal of popular lore has accumulated around this type of tomb. Okinawans believe that the shape of the tomb symbolizes the position of a woman giving birth to a child. This is related to another idea, "returning to the source" (moto ni kaeru in Japanese).

Four different but related meanings seem to be involved in the idea of "returning to the source": (1) that life here is but a momentary experience. One's real and permanent life is in the afterworld. At death one returns to his permanent home. (2) After death a person becomes a god (hotoke-san) in the Buddhist sense. He reaches this state 49 days after death, according to some explanations, though there is much confusion on this point. This godhood is a "return to the source." (3) At death one returns to a state of peace, and (4) one returns to a former state or to a former place. It is with this last meaning that the turtleback tomb is associated in popular lore with "returning to the source."

On death one returns to the womb of nature from which he came. (Similar lore has collected around the Buddhist coffin in which the corpse is put in a position like that of a child in the womb). Whether the popular explanation is the true one is very hard to say. It certainly should not be accepted without critically evaluating the questions which such an explanation raises. Early European and American observers were quick to point out the similarities between those tombs and those of China, though the fact that they were introduced from China does not rule out the symbolic meaning they might have. Many Okinawans regard these tombs as indigenous. But the Okinawan antiquarians, who so love to find symbols in everything, would be loathe to surrender this lore. It is generally agreed that the tombs were introduced from Fukien province in China. Captain Basil Hall was the first western traveller, I think, to notice the similarity between Okinawan and Fukien tombs. M'Leod also mentioned it.

The gable (hafu) type of tomb is very common. There are also small temporary tombs of masonry, more often built of rocks. The tombs of Hinatogawa are of this type. There are also very old tombs, hollowed out of the rock of a hillside. These were rare in the villages. Only one was seen in the dense vegetation and undergrowth at the bottom of a deep ravine in the center of Hatsuda. Large tombs hollowed out of hillsides are a commonplace, but the small ones apparently were the tombs of the very poor. Recently a new small tomb is being built by families unwilling to undergo the expense of the larger tombs. Tombs, though appearing to be haphazardly placed on mountains or on rocky hillsides, are on privately owned land.

The tombs may also be classified as to use, that is, whether they are intended for a single or the extended family. In Hanashiro, tombs are of the extended family type, located on land owned by the main family. They are the responsibility of the head of the main family. Branch families may contribute to the purchase price of the land, construction materials, and to maintenance.

000 construction materials, and to maintenance.

614 766 In an earlier chapter, a villager's remark was quoted to the effect that Minatogawa was a branch family of Itoman. This is well illustrated in the burial customs of this village. Both children and adults are placed in a simple, temporary tomb, usually along the coast near the stonecutting area. Later the tomb is opened, the bones washed, and sent to Itoman. The transfer of the remains from the temporary tombs of the village to the extended family tomb in Itoman may be done at a time when it is necessary to open the Itoman tomb because of the death of a member of the extended family there. There is no second funeral. The cleaned bones are put in a box. There are short prayers before the opened Itoman tomb, the bones placed inside, and the box discarded.

764 602 In the adjoining village of Nagamo, burial customs are similar to those of Hanashiro. Nagamo has three different kinds of tombs: (1) large gable and turtleback extended family types, (2) a similar large tomb for a single family, and (3) small tombs for individual families.

The tombs of Matsuda also are mainly of the extended family type. There are examples here of the turtleback, the gable, and the new small tomb. They are scattered throughout the village area, sometimes on the summit of a hill whose slopes are given over to terraced rice fields or dry cropping. Not all families own tombs; for reasons of economy, the small tomb for individual burial is becoming more frequent.

765 [462] [078] [114] In all the villages, after the coffin is put inside the tomb, it is left there for about three years. The tomb is reopened, the bones are removed from the coffin, washed, and put back in the tomb, tasks done by female relatives of the deceased, usually women over 40 years old. This three year period is not a set one. If a later death occurs in the family, the coffin may be opened at that time. An old custom of placing the bones in an urn after they are taken from the coffin has been abandoned. Basil Hall has some interesting comments on these old Okinawan urns.

3

Observances in Memory of the Dead

765 769 Observances in memory of the dead are held in all villages on the 1st, 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, 35th, 42nd, and 49th day after death, and on the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 13th, 25th, and 33rd anniversary of death.

765 The simple observances and prayers at the tomb on the day following burial have already been mentioned. At the home, temporary memorial tablets made of white paper (shiroihai) are prepared to be replaced later with permanent red memorial tablets on the Buddhist god shelf. Both at home and at the tomb only relatives or close friends participate in the prayers and food offerings.

One person in front fills in the head and forelegs, another in back provides the rear and hindlegs. The lion, with its human mechanism, is a common sight at festivals and parades. It is a symbol of health and strength worthy of imitation). In the Festival of the Full Moon, during the autumnal equinox, the lion appears again and the whole village participates in prayers before the festivities begin.

On the 1st and 15th of each lunar month, the headman goes to the place of the guardian god and makes an offering of tea, burns a charcoal stick, and says a prayer. On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month, the village council and the elders assemble before the village burial palanquin (gan), offer prayer at the founder's site and then before the village office where the lion is standing.

Minatogawa. This village has three deity places and various explanations are given for this. Some believe that two of them represent sites of co-founders, a first son, and his younger brother, the second son. The third site is vaguely known as a village god place. It is a small outdoor place of worship on the main village road, with a step and a shelf for charcoal sticks. The founders' sites are located in the center of the settled area, but on different sides of the road. In the site of the second son, there are three stones, shaped like life savers but with a bottom for placing the charcoal sticks, three glasses for tea, and three bottles. The site of the supposed first son, less well kept, has a small altar, four stones, tea cups, and cans for the burning of incense.

On New Year and at O-Bon, the whole, or substantial portions, of the village pray first at the supposed first son's site, then at the second son's. Prayers are offered also at the roadside deity place. Some of the younger villagers hope that as the older residents die off, the expenses of providing offerings and upkeep for all three can be eliminated and that simpler observances can take place at the roadside shrine. The situation now is complicated by the fact that many people regard themselves as descendants of one or the other co-founder.

Matsuda. In this village, the founder's site is reached by stairs leading up a hillside. It is in the settled area near a dense growth of trees and shrubs. Close by there is a shed in which the lion skin is kept. In this village the founder's site seemed less important than another religious place, on the main road, in which women of lesser rank in the former priestess system participate in ceremonies. In this village there seems to be less participation by all the people of the village at the place of the guardian or founder deity, and, instead, representatives, like the headman, elders, and the former priestesses conduct the ceremonies at New Year, O-Bon, and at the equinoctial holidays.

Between 1875 and 1895, when the court life at the old capital of Shuri was broken up under Japanese influence, many families of noble origin moved into the country to become farmers, and the village grew in size. These people settled mainly outside the central village in areas where land was available. One family moved into Taira proper, forming the third "main house." Although it still maintains feeble ceremonial connections with Shuri, it gave up its noble title shortly after coming north and moved its ancestral tomb to the community. The noble families who settled in the valleys and hills preserved their distinctive traditions until the end of World War II. Their noble descent was noted in the population register, and intermarriage with commoners was discouraged.

Except for these Shuri migrants, few outsiders seem to have settled in Taira prior to World War II. The residents on the southern part of the island, especially the residents of Naha and Shuri, consider northerners rustics. Although this part of the island was often used as a hiding place by political and criminal refugees from the south, who are said to have founded nearby villages, none of them made their home in Taira.

The original settlers of Taira were reluctant to accept later arrivals in their midst. Because of the fear of spirits, foreign to the village, they prohibited the burial of the newcomer's dead near the tombs shared by the members of the "main houses." To this day the funeral urns of a family who came to Taira about 60 years ago and later intermarried with settled villages are kept in a cave, away from all other tombs.

Higashi township was established in 1922. The area had previously belonged to Kushi township to the south, but the great distances between villages and the mountainous character of the country made efficient administration very difficult. Furthermore, some Higashi inhabitants felt that because of temperamental differences and divergent interests they should separate from the southern township. Since 1922 contacts have been predominantly with Ogimi township to the northwest and the town of Nago, 16 miles away. Once the road connecting the two coastlines was completed in 1936, Taira's isolation decreased considerably, and it became the administrative seat of Higashi township in 1946.

Taira also became the home of the high priestess. In the period prior to direct Japanese administration, her office was under the jurisdiction of the Shuri court (Lebra, 1958), and her predecessors must have been appointed by the Okinawan kings. Taira may have been chosen as the seat of the high priestess in lieu of Kawata because Kawata lacks the good rice land which traditionally went to the high priestess by royal decree. Some of this rice land is still in the hands of the living priestess.

312 365 [482] [859] water is diverted from a stream a mile above the village and piped into the upper and lower tanks where people fill their buckets which they carry home on a shoulder yoke. Both tanks always attract children. Before faucets were installed, the two spigots on each tank were closed with a wooden stopper which the children often pulled to get a drink or water to play in. An open lot surrounding the upper water tank is another popular play area.

361 On the eastern side of the village below the main road lies a flat sandy plain, separating the actual beach from the houses above. Children are frequently found playing there or walking along the beach to the mouth of the Noro Mata and Fukuji rivers, which reach the sea [764] about 400 yards away. To the west of the central village lie the tombs [211] and the monument for the war dead of the village.

487 [133] Many hills around the village drop off vertically toward the south; these drops are partly effects of the geological conditions, such as karst depressions, partly caused by erosion of drainage during the heavy rains. Narrow paths, leading up the steep claylike hillsides, are slippery [491] and very treacherous during rains. On the way to school in Kawata, the neighboring village, children have to pass a section of the road where river and rains have washed away the bank so badly that a misstep on the edge of the road could lead to a fall of more than 50 feet.

312 [857] [487] The little river which runs through parts of the valley behind Taira is another gathering place of children. A path alongside it leads into the hills and mountain forest lands. Seven minutes walking along this path takes one to Umugui, a natural swimming hole which also serves as one of the favorite laundry places. During the summer the river offers several other popular swimming spots downstream from Umugui. [296] There is also a little concrete bridge in the rice fields beyond the houses, where adults and children go to wash laundry and sometimes pots and pans. Yamagawa well is a water hole, lined with concrete, near the northwestern part of Taira. Before water faucets were installed, girls frequently went there to wash their hair and do laundry.

859 [484] Children go to the fields to look for flowers and berries or, in the case of older boys, to cut grass for animals. Distances covered by any child depend, of course, on the age. Younger siblings under 5 accompany the older ones to places beyond the area, but no expeditions extend to areas that are not also regularly traversed by adults in the course of their daily duties. Perhaps because of the multiple rivers and water sources, the beach offers less enticement than one might expect. On some days a group may decide to play on the beach, but since sand is also available throughout the village, everybody will soon shift back to some other area inland.

137 Tropical plants, bushes, and trees grow at sea level. At higher ele-

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

women chant. The tempo becomes more and more frenzied, and at a certain moment a bell rings. Nobody knows who rings it, and no amount of questioning elicited any information other than that this was done by divine action.

Ancestral worship is equally important in the life of Taira people. Each house of an oldest son has a shelf with a shrine in the main living room. On this shelf the family keeps the ancestral tablets, each representing a deceased ancestor of a recent period. The tablets for whole family lines are kept on the shelves of the main houses. Through this system a family maintains continuity between the living and the dead. Although a deceased person is believed to become a buddha or a god who ascends to heaven, his presence is still felt by the living relatives. If they fail to make the required offerings on the first and fifteenth day of each lunar month, or otherwise neglect religious duties toward the ancestor, misfortune may come to the family. At the same time, the worship of common ancestors holds branches of the larger kin groups together.

No village adult died during our stay, but the funeral practices for adults described by Glacken (1955) and Pitts et al. (1955) for other villages in Okinawa are similar. Seven years is the age limit for a child burial, which is simple and does not require attendance of people other than immediate relatives and perhaps one or two neighbors.* During the study an 8-year-old boy died from an illness and was given a full funeral, which is similar to that of adults.

The funeral must take place at the first outgoing tide after the body has been prepared and dressed. Accompanied by family, residents of the ward, and mourners from other parts of the village whose number depends on the prominence of the dead, the body is carried on a simple, open litter to the tomb area just west of the central village (see map 2). Women feel free to show their emotions, while men remain outwardly calm. Until decomposition takes place, the body remains in a tomb used by the whole village for temporary entombment. Like other village ceremonies, funerals are less elaborate now than they once were, perhaps to the relief of all concerned, since death is highly anxiety provoking, and nobody feels comfortable during the prayers and the ritual farewell to the corpse at the tomb. The participants receive a cup of sake before leaving the tomb area to cleanse them of the pollution of death. Some people still prefer to return to the village by a different route so that the spirit of the dead person will be fooled and unable to follow.

* The reason for this is possibly that the younger child has not yet fulfilled his filial obligations.

757 frequently and may be repeated as many as four times during the
[854] first year of a child's life. An older child occasionally undergoes this
[164] treatment for a case of violent impetigo. Even a horse may be bled in
[232] this way for loss of appetite or other symptoms of disease.
[578] A woman whose face had been struck in an unusual display of temper underwent a blood letting soon after a swelling appeared. Her neighbor from across the street, a farmer like everyone else, sterilized her cheek with iodine and then cut it with a razor until the blood flowed freely. After a night's rest, the woman appeared outside her house without any signs of swelling and seemingly recovered.

753 As was pointed out previously, many diseases are believed to be
776 caused by supernatural forces: the ancestor spirits, spirits of those who
769 have just died, and natural deities and evil spirits who wander around
775 at night. The ancestors expect proper respect and attention and in gen-
[764] eral are benevolent unless neglected. Spirits of those who have recently died are most dangerous if the deceased is from another village. For deceased villagers one is careful to purify oneself after the funeral. The doors of each house are shut at night to protect against the evil spirits of the night air. Disease is less frequently caused by natural deities who have been neglected or mistreated.

755 In case of sickness or other unfortunate events in the family, some-
756 body may go to consult the *yuta*, a shaman who communicates with
[787] the supernatural. She discovers the cause of misfortune with the help of rice oracles and through powers of divination received through visions and hallucinations. There is no *yuta* living in Taira now, so that people have to travel to the other side of the island, an hour or more on foot, if they want to learn about the source of some evil. Taira
[769] people make many such trips to consult this shamanistic specialist. The most common cause of misfortune discovered by the *yuta* is neglect of ceremonies to the ancestral gods or, less frequently, the neglect of cere-
[793] monies to the natural deities. Although the *yuta* stands in no direct connection with the high priestess, she may suggest that her client ask the priestess for special prayers to rectify the negligence. In such cases, then, the competence of individuals in the family may not be adequate to deal with the ancestral world, and the priestess enters into family religion.

597 Some Taira parents still find an adoptive parent for a sickly child in
755 the belief that his own ancestors have caused bad health, and that this
769 can only be remedied by making a formal arrangement which transfers
[796] ancestral responsibility for the child to another family. The child remains with his own parents and only visits his foster parents during the New Year and the midsummer Buddhist *Bon* Festival, which honors ancestors, and perhaps at one or two other occasions during the year.

857 intimate as they used to be. He has little in common with them, but
561 since he still takes care of a younger sibling or plays games to which younger children are attracted, there remain frequent contacts between the age groups. The transition between first grade and second grade is in no way as pronounced as the drastic status change from
[866] kindergarten to first grade. Children feel it mostly as a gradually increasing pressure toward assuming more responsibility. The transition which takes place at a ritual level • during the early latency period, however, is not reflected in their daily life.

CHORES AND RESPONSIBILITY TRAINING

857 Although adults say that the elementary school student is still very
868 much of a child who only toward the latter part of this stage can seriously be expected to contribute much to the tasks and duties in home and village; the children, in fact, do some work daily. Already in first grade, responsibility is approached with seriousness, girls exceeding boys in this respect. Children beg tasks, and obeying the school's directive to "help one's parents" seems to become the prime objective of first graders who have just proudly attained their new
857 status. They plead to accompany their older siblings who, with much
868 less zeal than the younger ones, gather giant African snails after a heavy rainfall, hunt frogs, dragon flies, and grasshoppers, or wash
231 potatoes for the pigs. Adults consider some of these chores play.
[866] Although frogs and grasshoppers are fed to the chickens, and minnows and seaweed are added to the pig swill, nevertheless, adults would not seriously label expeditions to collect these responsible. On the other hand, if there is no available feed,' as occasionally happens, the child will be scolded and berated for "thinking only of play and not o' the hungry chickens." Four- to 6-year-olds are discouraged from these foraging trips, for the danger of snake bites and accidents in the paddies and on the beach is very real. Accompanied by older siblings, however, they, too, may participate.

Some tasks, such as fetching water and feeding the pigs, cutting grass for the horse and goats, washing down the horse, and gathering faggots for the hearth, are still too difficult for the first grade child. But some of them are attempted, at least by assisting older children.
866 Once the child starts off to school, he is made aware that he is

[764] • In case of death, the child who has reached the age of 8 must be given a full
[775] fledged burial since in afterlife he becomes a buddha from now on. We had no indication that children were aware of this.

the Year of the Horse, and so all persons born during any year of the Horse--- 888
1942, 1930, etc.---celebrated their "year day" on the first Day of the Horse 527
of the new year. Although theoretically all year days are important, in practice only those of old age are given much attention. These are the celebrations of the 61st, 73rd, 85th, and 97th years. The 88th and 90th may also be celebrated. The celebration of the year day of an old person is a matter of pride for the whole family; formal invitations are sent, and the guests are served food and drink requiring considerable expense on the part of the family.

Death After his death a person does not cease to be of any importance to 769
the family. On the contrary he takes on a new importance as a focal point for ceremonies and perhaps for feelings of anxiety.

Death is attributed to both natural and supernatural causes[1] with 761
natural causes probably barely in the majority. But there is also the vague notion that one's life span is predetermined.

Almost immediately after the death of a person, members of his family 756
usually consult a yuta to learn if there was any last request or information 763
that the deceased had wished to impart to his family. This might consist of an explanation of his death, a confession of some early misdeed, or last instructions to his heirs. While I was working at Yamada an informant, an energetic, thoroughly likeable old lady, died suddenly. I learned later that her family immediately went to Yakena, some twelve miles away, a place famous for its many yuta. There they consulted a yuta and asked if there had been any message the old woman wanted to communicate. They were told that the old woman had been destined to die a year before but because she was such a good woman she had lived an extra year, during which she had accomplished everything she had intended to do---there was nothing to reveal. The family was relieved and comforted.

The Funeral Women may cry out immediately upon learning that a mem- 764
ber of the family has died. The body is laid in the second room of the house and flexed so that it may be more easily put into the coffin. If the death occurs in the morning the funeral may be held the afternoon of that day; if later in the day, the next afternoon. Offerings are placed before the body and when the funeral is not until the next day, relatives keep a wake over it.

The funeral itself consists of a ceremony at the home of the deceased, a procession to the tomb, and the placing of the coffin in the tomb. These steps may be more or less elaborate depending upon the means of the family. However, the local unit, the 'han' or the chinju, takes responsibility for some activities, making for uniformity. Member of the 'han' or chinju make two paper tablets with the name of the deceased written on them and make a large square wooden box for a coffin. On the afternoon of the funeral, the body is put into the coffin and a tray containing one of the paper tablets, offerings of fruit, and an incense burner is placed before it. If the de- [793]
ceased has requested it, a Buddhist priest may be called from one of the larger towns, but many country people do not call a priest, and indeed may never

[1] See Chapter IX.

764 have the occasion to talk with one. If a priest is called, he kneels before
793 the coffin, rings a bell, and recites from the sutras. His recitation is in
[177] a Japanized Sanskrit, which is probably wholly incomprehensible to all. After the recitation he burns incense before the coffin and the assembled relatives and friends do likewise. The coffin is then carried out of the house and put into the gang, a red palanquin that is village property in many villages. At this point all present pray. The procession to the tomb now begins. It is led by the bearer of a flag announcing the death, followed by the priest (if there is one), then the paper tablet carried by the heir of the deceased, who holds an umbrella over it. Then the family comes, then male relatives and neighbors, and then the gang containing the coffin, borne by four neighbors of the deceased. And finally come the female relatives and neighbors of the deceased. When the procession arrives at the enclosure before the tomb, the neighbors who have been bearing the gang set it down and relatives take the coffin out and carry it in before the tomb. Only relatives and the priest enter. While the women again weep aloud the coffin is put into the tomb and offerings are left before it. In returning, the women take a different route.

767 Formerly funeral processions were led by member of a special profes-
565 sion called nimbuchaa (from nimbuchi, J. 'nembutsu', a kind of Buddhist
[174] prayer for the dead). These persons formed a separate social class looked down upon by others, and lived in a few separate villages, rather like the Eta of Japanese society.

765 Bone-Washing and the Tomb After the body has been in the coffin a suitable length of time, usually about two years, the coffin is removed from the tomb, the body is removed from the coffin, which is destroyed, the remaining decayed flesh is then washed from the bones, and they are returned to the tomb.

764 In Northern Okinawa the tombs are relatively small and are usually the property of smaller kinship units, but in Southern Okinawa the tombs are larger and are usually the property of the larger kin groups, the munchu. In some instances several munchu share the same tomb. Even the smaller tombs are built with considerable expense; the larger ones cost the equivalent of several hundred dollars. Both the larger and the smaller tombs contain a floor at ground level upon which a coffin may be set and behind this a shelf or
[563] shelves upon which washed bones are placed. Families descended from the former gentry class place the washed bones into large urns. Commoners simply place the bones on the shelf and when the shelf is filled, push the older bones into a pit behind the shelf. If one death follows another so closely that there is a coffin with unwashed bones still in the tomb, the family, rather than reopen the tomb too soon, may choose to make a temporary tomb by walling a natural opening in the rocks. Or, as may happen in the case of the tombs belonging to the larger kin groups, if there is a body in the tomb with flesh sufficiently decayed for bone-washing, the family who suffered that loss may wash the bones at the same time that the family who has suffered the second loss is holding its funeral.

765 The bone-washing is an emotionally charged performance. Women usually wash the bones and do so with a great and apparently genuine display of grief.

Two members of the SIRI team both saw bone-washings, and were both impressed by this display. The ceremony I saw consisted not only of the washing of one set of bones but the transfer of another skeleton from another tomb. While the tomb was being prepared the daughter of the man whose bones were being transferred was made to hold the skull. The sight of the teen-age girl holding her father's skull before her, hardly able to move, her lips and eyes shut tight, tears streaming down her face, is one not easily forgotten. 765

The Okinawans are curious about the funeral customs of others, sensitive about their own, and possibly dissatisfied with them. Their sensitivity is shown by the fact that after I had observed the bone-washing just mentioned, someone circulated a rumor, untrue, that I had photographed the ceremony in order to show Americans what went on. This rumor might have seriously damaged my rapport with this family and with others in the community if I had not been defended by the person who had supervised the bone-washing, the old lady mentioned at the beginning of this section. All three SIRI team members were questioned about American practices and heard statements to the effect that perhaps cremation should be adopted. Cremation does, of course, do away with the necessity for both the bone-washings and the large tombs. A crematorium is operating in Naha, but it is doubtful if the practice will spread very rapidly in the country. New tombs, bigger and better than ever, are still being built, old ones are being repaired, and the familiar method of burial and reburial goes on. The prestige attached to the larger and impressive tomb is undoubtedly a factor in the survival of the system. But there may also be psychic needs as yet unexplored that the system and in particular the emotional orgy of the bone-washing satisfies. 764 765 123 829 [554]

Offerings to the Dead After the funeral the family of the deceased makes offerings both before the tomb and before the temporary paper tablet in the home. During the first seven weeks after a death this tablet is kept on a low table with incense burning before it; relatives and neighbors make formal visits in order to burn incense, pray, and leave gifts of money. On every seventh day till the forty-ninth the family makes extra offerings, burns uchikabi (imitation paper money said to be used for paying taxes in the next world), and makes offerings before the tomb. Then the name is written on the permanent tablet. Thereafter, the family makes offerings at the tomb and at the tablets and burns uchikabi on the first, second, seventh, thirteenth, twenty-fifth, and thirty-third anniversaries of the death. At the end of this time the deceased is believed to require no more individual consideration---if all the offerings up to that time have been properly made. 765 769

However, throughout each year on a number of occasions offerings are made for all the dead members of the family. These occasions are the major holidays, nearly all of which are primarily directed toward the worship of the dead. The principal of these are: 1) Lunar New Year's; 2) Shiimii, in the spring, an occasion for visiting both the tomb of the immediate family and tombs of more remote ancestors; 3) the U-machii, the 15th days of the 5th and 6th lunar months, occasions when representatives of the larger kin groups worship before the ancestral tablets at the main house; 4) U-bung, during the 7th lunar month, when all the dead are believed to return to the house. Beside these there are a number of minor holidays on which offerings are made. 769 527

where they are observed there are generally few participants. Also many ceremonies have lost all meaning save that of custom, which is considered sufficient reason for their observance. 796 178

The authors heard dissatisfaction expressed with regard to current funeral practices. At one bone-washing ceremony witnessed by the author, several of the men stated that the practice was pointless and should therefore cease. Statements favorable to the Japanese practice of cremation were frequently heard. 764 765 829

Urbanization Prior to Japanese annexation there existed a sharp urban-rural dichotomy in Okinawan culture. This might best be characterized as a rural peasantry and an urban gentry-nobility. The latter group was in contact with Japan and China and was literate, while the former was divided into many small, isolated villages, lived in a state of serfdom, and was largely uneducated. The urban culture was strongly influenced by its foreign contacts, but in the rural areas an indigenous culture was preserved virtually untouched by outside influences. 369 177 [565]

The Japanese impact was first felt in the urban areas, and the city of Naha gradually assumed the characteristics of a Japanese city. It became the center for the diffusion of things Japanese into the countryside. Despite a number of important changes---abolition of communal land tenure, introduction of private property, gradual penetration of a money economy, introduction of schools and national organizations---rural-urban differences remained strong. The character of the village tended to remain homogeneous and conservative, and contacts with the city were infrequent. When one emigrated from the village, the move usually was to a point outside the country rather than to another part of the island.

World War II shattered the isolation and homogeneity of the village. The American occupation coupled with the cumulative effect of the change initiated by the Japanese has served to bring the village into a closer relationship with the urban areas. The result has been the urbanization of the rural areas. By means of newspapers, motion pictures, and radio the villager has come to share the cultural life of the city. Rural-urban differences in diet, dress, education, entertainment, mobility, and values are tending to disappear. Marked improvements in transportation have given the villager a new mobility, enabling him to participate in the labor market of the city and giving new outlets for his products. The nature of the village is increasingly more heterogeneous due to the presence of newcomers, increased occupational specialization, and greater interaction with the outside world. There is a greater reliance on goods produced by industrial society, and a number of villagers commute daily to a place of employment in the city or in nearby military installations. The trend is toward an ultimate disappearance of rural-urban differences; the process is one that is well advanced in the United States, but in Okinawa it is in an early stage. 369 177 178 621

Conclusion Okinawa has been in a process of change for over fifty years. World War II and the American military occupation have served to accelerate greatly the forces for change. Despite this, Okinawan culture has not been overwhelmed and has managed to preserve its identity. A number of 177 178